

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

### THE INTRODUCTION OF THE SMALL BUSINESS HEALTH IN- SURANCE PROMOTION ACT

**HON. MAX SANDLIN**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 12, 2004*

Mr. SANDLIN. Mr. Speaker, with nearly 44 million Americans lacking basic health care coverage, it is time to take action. Health care is a basic necessity—not a luxury—for all Americans.

The House Republicans claim to be concerned about the uninsured, but actions speak louder than words. Consider what they've passed this year. Their budget resolution decimates Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). The Republican budget requires a \$2.2 billion cut in Medicaid funding, which will compromise the well-being of over 500 million children, their parents, seniors, and disabled individuals. This comes at a time when States are already in fiscal crisis, resulting in nearly every State cutting their own Medicaid program by slashing eligibility, cutting benefits, raising co-payments and reducing provider payments.

Republicans have also tried to allow \$1 billion in SCHIP funding to expire on September 30, despite the critical need to provide health care coverage to needy children. Earlier Federal and State cuts to Medicaid and SCHIP have already caused irreparable harm to families in Texas. Since SCHIP cuts in Texas took effect last September 1, 2003, enrollment for kids has dropped from over 507,000 children to 377,051. For those children fortunate enough to retain some health coverage, they have had to endure the loss of all dental, vision, and hospice benefits.

How is this acceptable? How can we tolerate cuts that will compound this problem?

Mr. Speaker, it is a commonly held misconception that people without health insurance are people who don't work. Nationwide, more than eight in ten of the nearly 44 million uninsured persons in 2003 lived in families where the head of the family worked. In fact, in most States today, a significant portion of the workforce is without insurance.

Too many hard-working, tax-paying American lack even the most basic health insurance coverage. It is time to move beyond the rhetoric and take action.

My home State of Texas actually leads the nation with 27 percent of our employed or self-employed workers without health insurance. This can be partially attributed to the fact that many of those uninsured are working in small businesses. In 2000 more than 17 percent of the labor force in Texas worked for businesses with 20 or fewer employees. The prohibitive expense of health insurance is a barrier to most small employers offering health coverage. The United States Chamber of Commerce recently estimated that it costs small businesses approximately \$9,000 a year to provide health insurance for each employee.

Mr. Speaker, join with 87 of my colleagues today in offering legislation that will provide immediate, concrete relief by introducing the Small Business Health Insurance Promotion Act today. This legislation will help secure affordable coverage for millions of self-insured individuals and employees of small businesses.

As an incentive to provide coverage, the Small Business Health Insurance Promotion Act would make small businesses or self-employed individuals eligible to receive a 50 percent tax credit for four years to defray the cost of health insurance. The bill would also authorize funding to create state and national multi-insurer pools to provide comprehensive and affordable health insurance choices to small employers and the self-employed.

To receive the tax credit, participating employers must offer all of their employees coverage through either the qualified state or national health insurance pools. These purchasing pools would ensure comprehensive and affordable health insurance. Participants would receive a choice of plans virtually identical to those available to Members of Congress and other Federal employees.

I also join my fellow democratic colleagues today in introducing the FamilyCare Act and the Medicare Early Access Act. The former builds upon the Medicaid and SCHIP programs by providing new funding to cover working parents. This legislation is expected to cover over 7.5 million low-income parents as well as improve coverage of children. The Medicare Early Access Act addresses the serious problem faced by the many retirees who lose or do not have health coverage in retirement but are not yet eligible for Medicare. This legislation will allow uninsured people between the ages of 55 and 64 to purchase Medicare. Enrollees will be given a 75 percent refundable, advanceable tax credit which will make it affordable. This legislation could result in coverage of 3.5 million previously uninsured people.

There are grave consequences for families without health insurance. People without coverage are less likely to get important preventive care and therefore are concomitantly more likely to suffer from serious health complications as problems go untreated. It also harms our economy. Sick people are not productive people. It makes sense to fortify the health of our nation.

The Small Business Health Insurance Promotion Act, FamilyCare Act and Medicare Early Access Act that we are introducing today offer real solutions to real problems. Together these initiatives could provide health coverage to more than 1/2 of the 44 million uninsured Americans. They represent a great step in the right direction that I am proud to be a part of.

### SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF PEACE OFFICERS ME- MORIAL DAY

SPEECH OF

**HON. DONNA M. CHRISTENSEN**

OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 11, 2004*

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 622, supporting the goals and ideals of Peace Officers Memorial Day and urge my colleagues to support its adoption.

Pursuant to a joint resolution approved October 1, 1962, Congress authorized and requested the President to designate May 15 of each year as "Peace Officers Memorial Day" and the week in which it falls as "Police Week."

In this regard, I applaud my colleagues JOEL HEFLEY, TOM DAVIS, HENRY WAXMAN and BART STUPAK, a former Peace Officer himself, for sponsoring H. Res. 622 to further encourage the observance of a day of remembrance for the more than, 1600 Federal, State, and local peace officers who were killed or disabled in the line of duty in past 10 years.

Mr. Speaker, Police Memorial Day 2004 will be a particularly sad one for my constituents in the Virgin Islands and me because of the passing of Virgin Police Officer Cuthbert Chapman who was shot several times on April 17 as he tried to stop a robbery.

Officer Chapman, also known as "Chappy," "Kimba" and "Cutty," was remembered as a soft-spoken and kind-hearted friend who was always willing to give a helping hand. He was a 12-year veteran on the force. He joined the police department on June 15, 1992, and was assigned to the Bicycle Patrol Unit at Wilbur Francis Command in Frederiksted. Chapman also served in various units and bureaus in the department.

As we remember and pay tribute to Officer Chapman, I must also mention and recognize some of the other Peace Officers, including Randy Stevens, Steven Hodge, Richard Callwood, Dexter Mardenborough, Wilbur Francis, Allen William, and Patrick Sweeney, who lost their lives striving to keep the streets and communities of the Virgin Islands safe.

Mr. Speaker, it is fitting that we acknowledge and commend the courage and dedication shown by all Peace Officers who have given their lives for their fellow citizens. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

### FEDERAL FUNDING FOR POLICE OFFICERS

**HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 12, 2004*

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak today regarding my grave concerns about funding for our Nation's police, firefighters, and emergency medical personnel.

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